

Message Text

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ORIGIN EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 AGR-20 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-11 INR-10

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON PRIORITY

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ETRD, NZ

SUBJ: TARIFF ON VINYL FLOOR COVERINGS

REF: LTR, DEANE BLACK TO COMATT WILSON, JULY 13, 1973

1. SINCE REFERENCED LETTER WAS SENT TO YOU BY MRS. BLACK, MR. LLANSO HAS FOLLOWED UP WITH A LETTER TO COMMERCE. RECENTLY, THE DEPARTMENT ALSO HAD A VISIT ON THE SAME SUBJECT FROM EMMETT W. HINES, DIRECTOR OF GOVERNMENT RELATIONS FOR ARMSTRONG CORK, AND DR. N. R. DANIELIAN, PRESIDENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC POLICY ASSOCIATION. THEIR PRESENTATION OF THE CASE DID NOT DIFFER SUBSTANTIALLY FROM THAT SET FORTH IN REFERENCED LETTER, BUT THEY EXPRESSED THEIR CONTINUING CONCERN ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF INCREASED TARIFFS OR REIMPOSITION OF LICENSING ON VINYL FLOOR COVERING, AND BELIEVED THAT THERE WAS SOME CAUSE FOR A SENSE OF URGENCY, SINCE THEY UNDERSTOOD TARIFF HEARINGS TO BE IMMINENT.

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2. DANIELIAN IN PARTICULAR THOUGHT THAT INCREASED RESTRICTIONS IN THE TRADE OF THIS PRODUCT WOULD NOT ONLY CONSTITUTE A BLOW AGAINST TRADE LIBERALIZATION IN A GENERAL SENSE, BUT WOULD BE DOUBLY SO IN VIEW OF THE FACT THAT RESTRICTIONS ON THIS PRODUCT WERE EASED BARELY FIFTEEN MONTHS AGO. HE SOUGHT ASSURANCES THAT THE USG WAS MAKING REPRESENTATIONS TO THE GNZ ON THIS ISSUE.

3. DEPARTMENT OFFICERS ASSURED DANIELIAN AND HINES THAT THE USG WAS OF COURSE IN FAVOR OF TRADE LIBERALIZATION, AND THAT WE SOUGHT TO PROMOTE IT WHENEVER POSSIBLE. BUT WE POINTED OUT THAT GNZ IN THIS CASE MIGHT ALSO BE RESPONDING TO DOMESTIC INTERESTS, AND THAT USG INFLUENCE WAS LIMITED IN CASES OF THIS TYPE. DEPARTMENT OFFICERS OBSERVED THAT IN ANY CASE, WE DID NOT KNOW THE RELEVANT FACTS IN THIS MATTER, PARTICULARLY WITH REGARD TO WHAT SORT OF REPRESENTATIONS MIGHT HAVE BEEN MADE ALREADY. WE TOLD DANIELIAN AND HINES THAT WE WILL INFORM THEM OF YOUR UNDERSTANDING OF THE CASE, AND OF ANY REPRESENTATIONS YOU HAVE MADE TO GNZ OFFICIALS.

4. ARMSTRONG'S AGENT HAS PROBABLY BEEN IN TOUCH WITH THE EMBASSY ON THIS MATTER, AND HAS NO DOUBT BEEN URGING ACTION. REQUEST THAT YOU INFORM THE DEPARTMENT WHETHER THE TARIFF BOARD HAS IN FACT SCHEDULED A HEARING ON VINYL FLOOR COVERING, ANY ASSESSMENT YOU HAVE OF THE OUTCOME OF SUCH A HEARING, AND WHETHER YOU HAVE HAD ANY DISCUSSIONS WITH GNZ OFFICIALS ON THIS SUBJECT. ROGERS

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